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Assessment of the Knowledge Regarding HIV/AIDS among Nursing College Students in University of Basrah

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Abstract

Background: AIDS is a common infectious disease worldwide, so every health staff have to have a knowledge about it, specially nursing staff .

Aim: To evaluate the knowledge of nursing college students about HIV/AIDS.

Method: The study was carried out on 150 nursing students at University of Basrah College of nursing during the 2018-2019. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection, which was consisted of twenty multiple choice questions to assess knowledge of students about HIV. Data was analyzed by using SPSS statistics version 23.

Results: The current results reveal that (76%) of nursing students have poor knowledge toward HIV/AIDS, and there was a nonstatistically significant difference between the stages.

Conclusion: The study concluded that nursing students need to increase their knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS by for example developing the curriculum of nursing college.

Keywords: Assessment, nursing, knowledge, HIV/AIDS.

Introduction

World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that 75 million people have been infected with HIV while about 32 million people have died of it. Globally, 37.9 million people were living with HIV at the end of 2018¹.

In Iraq about 0.1% of the total population are living with HIV comparing to other parts of the world, it is considered low-prevalence HIV epidemic^{2,3}.

Nurses play an important role in prevention of HIV by providing care and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS. Therefore, nurses should be competent in caring and solving health problems of them⁴.

Nurses have to deal with collecting various body fluid samples of patient for investigation, giving medication as per instructions, taking care of patients, and giving injections⁵.

Nurses and nursing students' attitude toward HIV/AIDS patient is determined by their knowledge of the same. It is important to assess the knowledge of nurses regarding the HIV/AIDS to evaluate the prevailing conditions and gap so that policy measures can be taken to improve the knowledge, if there is a gap. Since health care professionals including nurses have the responsibility of educating people about the ways of HIV contamination, their knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS patients play an important role in communicating with patients⁶.

The purpose of this study is to assess the knowledge of nursing students regarding HIV/AIDS.

Amongst the health care professionals, nurses and nursing students are an important component of the health care delivery system. Since they are the one who

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are responsible for the constant care of in-patients and thus, they come in close contact with blood and other body fluids of patients. Due to frequent and prolonged contact, they are being identified as a potential risk group for the HIV/AIDS spread. To reduce the transmission, adequate knowledge about the disease and practice of safety measures are of great importance. Generating awareness regarding HIV/AIDS in this group is crucial for AIDS management and the prevention of HIV spread⁷.

Methodology

Design of study: Descriptive cross-sectional study carried out to evaluate knowledge of students about HIV.

Setting of study: The study was conducted at university of Basrah college of nursing 2018-2019

Sample of study: Sample [150] from first, second, third and fourth stage of the college of nursing. Number of male [59] and female [91].

Study instruments: Structured questionnaire was used for data collection, consisted of two part:

Part one: Included demographic data [age, sex, type of study(morning or evening), residency (rural or urban), marital status, stage, to identify effect of demographic variables on students' knowledge.

Part two: Questionnaire was consisted of twenty multiple choice questions to evaluate knowledge of

students about HIV. Right answer given 5 score and false answer given zero score. Data was analyzed by using SPSS statistics version 23.

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study sample

| Variables | | Frequency | % |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| Sex | male | 59 | 39.3% |
| | female | 91 | 60.7 % |
| Stage | first stage | 40 | 26.7 % |
| | second stage | 33 | 22 % |
| | third stage | 38 | 25.3 % |
| | fourth stage | 39 | 26 % |
| Marital status | single | 140 | 93.3 % |
| | married | 10 | 6.7 % |
| Study type | morning study | 91 | 60.7 % |
| | evening study | 59 | 39.3 % |
| Residency | urban | 70 | 46.7 % |
| | rural | 80 | 53.3 % |

The table (1) showed that the number of females were more than males(60.7%, 39.3% respectively). Majority of the samples was single(93.3%). Students from morning study were relatively more than students from evening study(60.7%, 39.3% respectively), rural and urban areas had a slight difference in number of students(53.3%, 46.7%). Only(24%) of students had good knowledge regarding AIDS(table 2).

Table (2): Students' knowledge regarding AIDS

| Variable | F | % | Mean of score | Std. Deviation | p-value | Result |
|-------------------|-----|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------|-------------|
| Good knowledge | 36 | 24 % | 37.64 | 10.035 | 0.000 | significant |
| Poor knowledge | 114 | 76 % | 60.92 | 8.611 | | |
| Total sample =150 | | Mean of score =55.33 | | Std. Deviation =13.395 | | |

Table (3): Relation between variables and students' knowledge regarding AIDS

| Variables | | Mean of score | Std. Deviation | p-value | Result |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------------|
| Sex | Male | 55.93 | 13.566 | 0.661 | Insignificant |
| | Female | 54.95 | 13.344 | | |
| Stage | first stage | 53.88 | 13.936 | 0.149 | Insignificant |
| | second stage | 54.55 | 13.132 | | |
| | third stage | 59.61 | 13.968 | | |
| | fourth stage | 53.33 | 11.994 | | |
| Marital status | Single | 55.39 | 13.345 | 0.839 | insignificant |
| | Married | 54.50 | 14.804 | | |

| Variables | | Mean of score | Std. Deviation | p-value | Result |
|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------|---------------|
| Study type | morning study | 54.12 | 13.976 | 0.169 | insignificant |
| | evening study | 57.20 | 12.327 | | |
| occupation | Urban | 59.21 | 10.654 | 0.001 | significant |
| | Rural | 51.94 | 14.637 | | |

When comparing the variables under study with knowledge, the result showed that there was no statistical significant difference between sex, stage, marital status and type of study but there was a significant difference between students residency and knowledge (table 3). This difference may reflect the development in urban areas in terms of social and cultural communication, the Internet, the large number of schools, health centers, hospitals, and the multiplicity of occupations and businesses, as opposed to those in rural areas.

Table (4): Source of information regarding AIDS

| Source of information | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Books and social media | 83 | 55.3% |
| Schools & colleges | 71 | 47.3% |
| Friends & family | 42 | 28% |
| Health care provider | 20 | 13.3% |

Books and social media were the major source of information for students about AIDS (55.3%) which can be used as a way to educate students about various diseases, where health care provider (13.3%) could not be considered as a good source of information for students (table 4).

Table (5): Students' answers regarding HIV

| True and False Questions | Right Answer | Wrong answer |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| AIDS is considered viral diseases | 143 | 7 |
| AIDS Attacks Immune system | 142 | 8 |
| AIDS is transmitted by Sex with the infected person | 132 | 18 |
| HIV infection leads to joint pain | 17 | 133 |
| HIV infection leads to Swelling of the lymph nodes | 18 | 132 |
| HIV infection leads to Diarrhea | 29 | 121 |

Table (5) showed that Most students knew that HIV / AIDS was viral, attacked the immune system and sexually transmitted. On another hand most of them did not know the signs and symptoms of the patient, especially: pain joints, swollen lymph nodes, and diarrhea .

Discussion

This study was done to assess the knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among students of nursing college at Basrah University. In this study, it was found that main source of information among nursing students was Books and social media, followed by Schools and colleges. They got very less information from Health care provider. This result reflects the weak role of health care centers in educating the community about the seriousness of the disease and its transmission.

Large proportion of students had misconception regarding symptoms and complications of the disease. In Iraq there is a kind of silence on the cases of AIDS for religious and social reasons, because of the disease is associated with forbidden sexual relations which makes people believe that there are no cases.

Iraq is considered a country with a low level epidemic of HIV/AIDS. The prevalence of HIV in Iraq is currently less than 0.1% of population, but associated risk factors may increase because of liberalized trade relations and increased drug use. As of December 2014, less than 100 people living with HIV were reported. They were nationals and foreigners. 57% were infected by blood transfusion and blood products (WHO). Iraq faces greater HIV risks as a result of poverty, low literacy and inadequate knowledge of modes of transmission².

Nursing students should have adequate information about the disease because in future they will play important role in educating peoples and saving the life of patients and save themselves from infection.

Low knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among nursing college students need national awareness programs.

Ethical Clearance: Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the dean of college of Nursing, University of Basrah.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: Nil.

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